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1974/05/24

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TAGS: PINT PFOR CH

SUBJECT: PRESENT U.S.-PRC RELATIONSHIP

1. AFTER HAVING BEEN HERE A YEAR I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME PERSONAL COMMENTS ON THE SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, DERIVED ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM MY OWN UNTUTORED REFLECTIONS ON THE SUBJECT.
2. FIRST AND FOREMOST IN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SPECULATION IS THE POWER POSITION OF CHOU EN-LAI. I CANNOT BELIEVE HE HAS IN ANY DEGREE WHATEVER FORFEITED HIS UNIQUE STANDING WITH CHAIRMAN MAO; ONLY AN INGRATE WOULD REPUDIATE A LOYALTY, EXTENDING OVER HALF A CENTURY, THAT HAS SO LARGELY CONTRIBUTED TO THE PRESENT PRESTIGE OF THE PRC CHIEF AND HIS CULT, NOT TO MENTION THE SPECTACULAR MANNER IN WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS HANDLED THE COMPLEX INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THIS COUNTRY.

MOREOVER, FROM EVERY CREDIBLE SOURCE THERE IS TESTIMONY TO THE DEEP AFFECTION ENTERTAINED BY THE CHAIRMAN FOR HIS GIFTED COLLEAGUE. THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY TWO OLD MEN IN A HURRY, ANXIOUS TO SECURE, IF SUCH BE POSSIBLE, AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION TO THE REGIME THEY HAVE INVENTED AND ADMINISTERED.

3. CHOU HAS ALWAYS PLAYED SECOND FIDDLE TO MAO. NO ONE HAS EVER ACCUSED HIM OF AMBITION TO SUPPLANT HIS MASTER. WHY THEN ARE RUMORS SO PREVALENT ABOUT THE DECLINE OF HIS INFLUENCE?
4. I THINK THEY ARE CHIEFLY INSPIRED BY ENEMIES WHO, AFRAID TO ATTACK THE DEIFIED CHAIRMAN, WOULD LIKE TO FISH IN TROUBLED WATERS IN CASE OF MAO'S DECEASE, IF CHOU, THE TWIN BASTION OF PRESENT STABILITY, SURVIVED HIM. IF CHOU WERE TO PREDECEASE MAO, THE RESULTANT SHAPE OF THE SUCCESSION MIGHT BE SIMPLER TO FASHION.

THE REAL QUESTION IS WHETHER ANY INDIVIDUAL COULD
SOON REPLACE THIS DUUMVIRATE EXCEPT BY AN IMPROBABLE

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MILITARY COUP. THE MORE LIKELY IMMEDIATE SOLUTION MIGHT BE ADMINISTRATION BY A COLLECTIVELY FAITHFUL FOR AN UNSPECIFIED TIME TO THE DOCTRINES SO AMPLY PROPAGANDIZED BY THE CHAIRMAN.

5. I DO NOT DECRY THE NOTION THAT THERE ARE ALSO YOUNG MEN IN A HURRY, TO WHOM THE MEMORIES OF THE EARLY VICISSITUDES OF THE CCP, AND THE STIRRING EXPLOITS OF THE LONG MARCH ARE LIKE NOTES OF SCARCE-HEARD BUGLES. BUT THE DISCREDITING OR EVEN THE OVERTHROW OF CHOU SEEMS TO ME BEYOND COMPASS, EVEN IF THEY PLOT TO PRECIPITATE CHAOS.

6. THEREFORE, I AM INCLINED TO THINK THE TWO, OR EVEN ONE, IF THE OTHER DIES, WILL PERSEVERE IN TRYING TO ESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENTAL APPARATUS ON A BASE SO FIRM IT CANNOT EASILY BE DISMANTLED.

THE RELIEF OF CHOU FROM HIS CEREMONIAL FUNCTIONS IS A NATURAL DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF HIS AGE, AND THE EXHAUSTING LIFE -- SOME SAY AN AVERAGE WORKDAY OF 18 HOURS -- HE HAS LED FOR DECADES. I READ NOTHING SIGNIFICANT OF A SCHISM BETWEEN HIM AND THE CHAIRMAN IN THIS CHANGE OF PATTERN. OF COURSE, IF THE PRIME MINISTER BECOMES PHYSICALLY INCAPACITATED TO CARRY ON HIS REDUCED BURDENS THAT IS ANOTHER MATTER.

7. GIVEN A CONTINUANCE OF MODERATELY GOOD HEALTH FOR CHOU WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO MARK THE CHINESE-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP? HAS THERE INDEED BEEN A "COOLING OFF", A DISAPPOINTMENT AMONGST CHINESE LEADERS OF THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF ITS FRUITFULNESS FOR THEIR COUNTRY? THE ANSWER TO THIS IS, IN MY OPINION, A MODIFIED "YES". SOME OF THE VEILED ATTACKS AGAINST CHOU ARE LAUNCHED BY THOSE WHO FOR DOCTRINAIRE REASONS OPPOSE HIS OPENING WINDOWS TO THE WEST, AS WELL AS BY THOSE WHO CLANDESTINELY DISAPPROVE THE EXTENT OF THE RIFT WITH THE USSR. THESE CONSIDERATIONS ANIMATE HIS OPPONENTS WHO DARE NOT ATTACK THE SACROSANCT CHAIRMAN.

8. WHAT FOUNDATION IS THERE FOR THE DISAPPOINTMENT TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED? PRIMARILY, I THINK IT IS ASCRIBABLE (1) TO LATENT FEARS THAT OUR DETENTE WITH THE USSR WILL LEAD US INTO ACTIONS AND AGREEMENTS INIMICAL TO THE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE PRC. (2) TO A SUSPICION THAT WE WILL NOT WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS PROCEED TO

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A FULL DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE PRC, AND A WITHDRAWAL OF OUR EMBASSY FROM TAIWAN. (3) TO IMPATIENCE WITH OUR ALLEGED LACK OF INTEREST IN A DECISIVE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF CAMBODIA, WHERE THEIR OWN DIPLOMACY HAS RECENTLY TAKEN A SHARP TURN TOWARD MORE SUPPORT FOR THE KHMER ROUGE, AND A DOWNGRADING OF SIHANOUK, THOUGH THEY WILL KEEP HIM IN THE PICTURE. (4) TO FEAR OF THE REPERCUSSIONS ON U.S. POLICY VIS-A-VIS CHINA BECAUSE OF OUR CONCERN WITH CRISES ELSEWHERE, AND OUR DOMESTIC POLITICAL TRIBULATIONS.

9. I THINK IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO ELABORATE ON THESE FOUR POINTS, BUT THEY SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND. CHINESE OFFICIALS SOMETIMES TALK TO FOREIGNERS OTHER THAN AMERICANS IN THIS STRAIN.

DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS I HAVE HAD CONVERSATIONS INDIVIDUALLY WITH MORE THAN FORTY AMBASSADORS STATIONED IN PEKING; THEIR REFRAIN, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL SYMPATHIES, HAS BEEN MUCH AS I HAVE STATED. I DO NOT TAKE THIS AS NECESSARILY REPRESENTING THE AUTHORITATIVE VIEW OF CHINESE POLICY-MAKERS, FOR THESE DIPLOMATS HAVE LITTLE ACCESS TO THEM, BUT I BELIEVE IT DOES FAIRLY ACCURATELY MIRROR CURRENT PRC ATTITUDES TOWARD US.

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